The Importance of Chirography of Tazkerat-Al Shoara, Vaziri Library

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ABSTRACT
The main approach of this article is to introduce Tazkerat-Al Shoarato those who are fond of Iranian culture and literature. “Tazkerat-Al Shoara” is a book about poets who lived long before the author as well as those who were still alive at the time of book being written. It has one introductory section, seven chapters, and a final ending chapter. The original handwritten version of this book is kept in Vaziry Library of Yazd under the number 2604. The name of the scribe and the date of the scrip has not been found until now.

Key words: Correction, Tazkerat-Al Shoara, Vaziry Library, DolatshahSamarqandi

INTRODUCTION

The handwritten manuscripts area part of a society’s cultural heritage. They are also considered as cultural, historical, literary, and national identity of a nation. These copies are what is left of those great men who tried to open the gates of knowledge at their time. Therefore, editing and restoration of these pieces of art means putting a high value on this land’s scientific and cultural identity as well as showing the greatness of the souls of those who have passed away centuries ago but the freshness of their ideas can still be found between the lines of the ancient handwritten manuscripts.

Many of these writings, have not been known yet and the identity of their authors is unknown. So, it is the job of the elites of each society to edit and revive these works by introducing them to today’s generation and posterity in order to prevent the death of these works. After presenting a short introduction to “Tazkerat-Al Shoara” and giving some details about its different scripts, the author tries to introduce and show the importance of the manuscript of “Tazkerat-Al Shoara” which is kept in Vaziri Library.

Introducing DolatshahSamarqandi’s Tazkerat-Al Shoarato

TazkeratolShoarah is the second most valid Persian book which was composed in the form of historical poem and narrates the poets’ circumstances (Safa, 1999, 4: 533).

TazkeratolShoarabegins with the author’s “Dibache” which means preface. After the introduction of ten Arab poets, Persian poets were classified into seven classes in a way that the poets who lived during Dolatshah period were put into the last class (Brown, 1318:16). In addition the historical events and description of the kings who were supporters of poetry are also found in the book. In the end, the life description and values of seven great men of that time were presented and the book ends with "شطري از مقامات ابولغازی سلطان حسن بهادر" (the same, 521-541). As the author note the book was finished in 892 and it was presented to Amir AlishirNavaei.

Dolatshahgathered his information from what he had been told since he was a child, historical books, and the books of other poets. He sorted his book chronologically. This book includes the life description of nearly 150 well-known poets who lived long before the author, before the author, or were alive when the book was being written. Moreover, there is a lot of information about the dates of Mazie’s kings and Khalie’s governments in a way that can be used by those who want to study in this subject.

Dolatshah’s Tazkareh is a book with simple language and the style of writing specially the one which is used in introduction is neither complex nor too simple but something in between. On the other hand the prose which describes the poets is a charming narration especially whenever the author used the phrases such as “It was told that” or “it has been said that” the reader imagine himself/herself deep in the story. Although Tazkerat-Al Shoara is a great book which includes the description of many poets, in some cases it includes some wrong information about the lives of poets that shows the lack of enough research on the part of the author which was also a common error among literary works of that time.
For example, Dolatshah wrote about Asadi: “He continuously led Ferdows to poetize the Shahnameh and mentioned him that “this can be done by you only”. However, as ZabihollahSafa mentioned this error was committed because the author didn’t pay attention to Asadi’s date of death. Asadi passed away in 465 Hijrighamari while Ferdowsi’s date of death is 400. Therefore Asadi couldn’t be Ferdowsi’s mentor (Safa, 1993: 4; 533).

Not only did Dolatshah narrate the life of the poets but he also criticized their poems. He paid attention to the choosing a words and concept creating of the poets based on his favorite style of that time and criticized them on that basis. He didn’t like poems who were simple and free of complex and difficult terms. As a result he mentioned including the whole Rudaki’s poem “BooyeJooyeMoolian” was not worth the effort (Brown, 1939: 32).

Since Dolatshah was living in an era called Literary Devolution, he believed that being a port was an inferiority for some poets like Hafiz. So he in his book wrote other values of these poets other than their literary expertness and was completely ignorant that his book was written in the first place to describe poets and their skills.

**Different copies of DolatshahSamarqandi’s Tazkerat-Al Shoara**

Tazkerat-Al Shoara was the reference for many biography writers and because of its importance it was printed so many times in India, Lahore, Lidon, and Tehran. For the first time it was printed in Bombay in 1305 Hijrighamari by Mirza Mohammad Malekolketab with so many errors and lots of information missing. In 1318 Hijrighamami which is 1900 A.D. Edward Brown published its complete and edited version in Lidon. He noted that he worked on the printed version in Bombay as well as three other handwritten versions which were kept in Cambridge Darolfonoon Library. From these three copies the one with the identity number “Add. 831” was written in 979 Hijrighamari. The second one with the identity number “Add.813” was written in 1104 Hijrighamari and the third copy with the identity number “.0.6.47” in 984. He therefore wrote the final copy based on four copies and whenever he found a mismatch between copies he tried to include what looked more logical and true (Brown, 1939; introduction).

Before Edward Brown gave his final version to the press he made several contrastive analysis between his copy other valid copies one of which was in Jahrom, Fars which dated back to 980 Hijrighamari. Whenever he found a mismatch he looked older and more valid sources in London, Paris, and other places (the same,). After he publish the edited version everyone in Europe, India, and Iran noticed that his version is a great work and valid. It was then translated into Turkish in 10th century (Haji Khalifeh, 1, Sotoon 388). One of its Turkish translation with the title of “The Poets' Vessel” was printed in Istanbul by Soleyman Fahmi in 1259 (Brown, 1939, h). Homer – Poor Gashtal also translated it to German and then printed it. In 1958 Mohammad Abbasi and in 1959 Mohammad Ramazani edited Tazkerat-Al Shoara and published it. Ramazani considered revision of the book in the year 1956. He had access to Europe and India versions as well as three other unique handwritten versions best of which dated back to 1003 and didn’t have the name of writer on it. This version was very similar to the European printed version and Ramazani could make lots of improvement by the help of this version. The other versions were dated back to 1981 A.D and 988 Hijrighamari. Although they were not as helpful as the first version, they did help him revise Tazkerat-Al Shoara (Ramazani, 1959: introduction).

Although all the three versions of Brown, Abbasi, and Ramazaniare valuable works, they all lack a section showing the differences between different copies as well as descriptions and details. Therefore a new version needed to be printed to have has this information in it. As a result following the recommendation of Dr. ShafieiKadkani, Fatemeh Alagheh did this job as her thesis for PhD. In 2006 the publication of The Research Center for Humanities Sciences and Cultural Studies published this revised edition. Other than introduction and preface Miss Alagheh’s version includes appendices – ranging from several line to several pages- that are devoted to the biography of the poets whose names were mentioned in the original work. Moreover, there is a very helpful list of their bibliography in her version as well as a rich index based on people, tribes, places, and books. (Rezaei, 2010:71). A copy of Tazkerat-Al Shoara Dolatshah Samarghandi is kept in Vaziri Library of Yazd which has been discovered by nobody until now. The author of this article tries to introduce this specific copy and notes its importance.

**The place of keeping and its characteristics**

This copy with the identity number of 2604 and in 133 pages is kept in Vaziri Library of Yazd. This copy has no ordering and lacks any information about the writer, date of writing, signs or symbols.

The characteristics of this handwritten copy are as follows:


**The beginning and the end of Vaziri copy**

This copy begins with the phrase: “هذا كتاب نذره الشعراء” and after that there is a very short introduction. After the author praises the God, he notes that his book includes the biography of the poets who have passed away. This very short introduction does not exist in other copies and it is unknown that it was written by Dolatshah Samarghandi or the one who wrote the book. Although this copy lacks the date of writing and the name of the writer, there are some obvious similarities between it and the Brown’s version. Therefore it can be concluded that this copy is very old. However there are also some difference like differences in words, mismatch in page ordering, absence of some words, the style of handwriting, and the absence of some pages. Although sorting the pages in the right order was very difficult, in some cases the writer wrote the first word of the next page at the bottom of the previous page. This helped a lot in finding the right pages in the book. Moreover, the writer used the margins to take note some details about missing words. In most cases the writer used the Farsi abbreviation for noting these mistakes. The last page of this copy end with the phrase "در حكمت آی او استفاده نمود" while as it was mentioned before, the sorting of pages are wrong and the original copy ends with devotions to Islamic king of that time.

Chirography and features of Vaziri copy

As it was noted in the previous section, this copy includes different handwritings and has some writing features as follows:

1. The preposition "ب" is attached to the second word as in: بیانگر. بیانگر: "ب" which is a negative marker is written apart from the verb: بیانگر. بیانگر.
2. The prefix "ب" is written apart from the verb: بیانگر. بیانگر: بیانگر.
3. The letter "ب" is written as "ب" instead of "ب" whenever the noun is not known to the reader: خانه ای‌ی (زنگ) instead of خانه ای‌ی (زنگ).
4. Using of "ب" instead of "ب" in the marking preposition: "ب" is attached to its previous word: "ب"، "ب".
5. Dots are not used everywhere: "ب".
6. The verbal prefixes are attached to the verb: "ب".
7. In some cases "ب" is used instead of "ب": حضرموت بحسروی. حضرموت بحسروی.
8. Using of "ب" instead of "ب" in the preposition: "ب" instead of "ب".
9. Using of "ب" instead of "ب" is written as "ب" in the absence of some pages: "ب" instead of "ب".
10. Notes are taken in the margins: "ب".
11. Using of "ب" instead of "ب" in the introduction: "ب" instead of "ب".
12. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان ب" instead of "ب".
13. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
14. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
15. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
16. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
17. Not using "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
18. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
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20. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
21. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
22. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
23. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
24. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
25. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
26. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
27. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
28. Using of "ب" instead of "ب": جهان "ب" instead of "ب".
29. Not following writing and punctuation rules.

The value and Importance of Vaziri Library of Yazd Tazkerat-Al Shoarato

Like all the other cultural and lingual heritages of this land this handwritten copy has several advantages that can be classified in this way:

1. From the stylistics point of view: although this copy lacks the date of writing, there are many evidences that show it is an old copy so that can be used in studies of historical literary writing styles. In other words, by examining and studying the lingual and intellectual features of this copy one can observe which words or expressions that are used today are old. The writing style of its introduction is neither difficult and complex nor simple and easy but something in between. However, when it comes to poets’ biographies its style is easy and interesting. Researchers in this field can easily evaluate its validation by comparing and contrasting to other copies of Dolatshah’s Tazkerat-Al Shoarato.


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2) From the linguistics point of view: by looking at this copy one can realize the quality and quantity of linguistic development in choosing of vocabulary, grammatical structures, semantics, and syntax of the Persian. Therefore it can be observed how much Persian language has been changed since then.

There is no doubt that every piece of literary work -if edited and corrected- can clarify some part of the ambiguous history of literary works. In other words, the more we have access to such literary historical samples, the more accurate our estimating of language development will be.

3) From intellectual and content point of view: the readers of Tazkerat-Al Shoara know that apart from information about literary styles and poets’ biographies, it is its historical information that plays an important role in writing of his work. For example the occurrence of some battles, historical events, or existence of some political and historical characters can be validated by these works.

In this part some details about its lingual, intellectual, and literary importance are covered:

A) Lingual properties: the lingual signs existing in this version are few.

Using of old terms and verb conjugations, Arabic vocabulary, Arabic phrases, verses from Quran and anecdotes of holy Islamic Imams are considered most important lingual properties in this version. Below some examples about these properties are mentioned:

1- Omitting the repeated verbs:

«هلاك مستعمه ك أخر خلفاء عباسی است شهرت عظيم دارد و نزد شهير نهدرك و بين الناس مشهور»

In this sentence "است" is omitted because it is used twice.

2- Using of old terms:

مردد خود کار های بزرگ را ضبط نیازند کرد، و "قصیده نامه محمدزاده نزدیک و قابل ملاحظه"، لاحق رعیت و نشانه از نوور گشته.

The underlined verbs are no longer used.

3- Using of Arabic interjectional phrases:

«این ضعیف را در حضور خرچو طوس به اوج معموران دلالیم: عطریات عتیق، کرم و تزیینی" می نامند.»

4- Using of Arabic vocabulary:

خواجه ایشان را به اوج آگرام و تلف نموده.

5- Using of two verbs side by side:

بر سر سراي آمردان دیدن، به زیرت مولانا رفته دیدن که در جهور مولانا بسته است.

6- Using of "کفا" Instead of "کف":

«چشم فزناً کرد و جان به حق تسلیم رکد».

7- Using of benedictory verbs:

از این کردار بی‌گیوانی.

8- Using of "باید ناکید" for emphasizing as a prefix before verbs:

گوش و بینی شاد ملک آقا بیرونیت.»، خواجه جون از پیرمرد این سخن ویران.

9- Using of Quran verses and anecdotes of holy Islamic Imams in a way that some cases they are blended in a sentence:

این خیر بر همه خریارت شریفیه فرضدار قال اللبی صلی اللہ علیه و سلم افضل الاعمال سفی الله علیه و صورات خریارت این صاحب خیرا را به...».

B) Intellectual properties include praising God and declaring that he is the only God, eulogy for the Mohammad the great prophet, praising the good works of Khalifas (kings) of that time, praising the poets, praising Amir Alshir, naming 10 Arab poets, mentioning Seven Stages and describing each one separately, mentioning the great people who existed in his time like: Abd Alrahman Jami, Amir Alshir, Ahmad Soheili, Khajeh Afzalo Afdin Mohammad Vazir, Khajeh Abdol Almorvairad, and Khajeh Asfeli.

Literary properties: Doltshaj in his Tazkerat-Al Shoara used different types of literary figures of speech, similes and metaphors. He also paid lots of attention in choosing the right words in his writing. In some parts his writings included rhythmic phrases, synonymous terms, paronomasia, amphibology, imaginary words, references to Quran and anecdotes of holy Islamic Imams, references to proverbs, and some poems in Arabic and Turkish. Below some examples are presented:

1- Paronomasia:

آب حلبی از زیای دریگ است و یک دیده بیر از خصائصه دیگری. له درد : جاسان ناقص حرکتی.

This is called "incomplete action paronomasia".

2- Using of several adjectives after each other:

پیشانه علیال عمان عائش مطهر صاحب همتدود، پیششی نمی‌منظر و خوش خوی خوش طبع کرمی...».

3- Using of idioms and proverbs:

"آب وقت‌ه هجوی بیر آمدن، " آب پلیف نزد سیمامی بردن.

4- Metaphor:

آن شرکرمان را به بوستان جنگت ماموری فرستاد."}


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The previous versions used for editing

Following is the description of two hand written versions were used for editing this version of Tazkerat-Al Shoara:

1) The printed version of Edward Brown: he was Persian language teacher in Cambridge Daro Alfonoon institutes in protected British lands. He edited Amir DolatshahbNAlaEdolehBakhtishhahAlgaziAlsamarqandi's TazkeratoAlshoara in 1318 HijriShamsi which is 1900 A.D. He used one printed version and three hand written version for editing Tazkerat-Al Shoara:
   1. The printed version by Mirza Mohammad MalekoAlketab in 1305 HijriShamsi in Bombay which had lots of errors and missing parts.
   2. The handwritten version with the number of Add.831 written in 979 HijriQamari.
   3. The handwritten version with the number of Add.833 written in 1104 HijriQamari.
   4. The handwritten version with the number of 00.6.47 written in 984 HijriQamari.

He edited the TazkeratoAlshoara based on these versions and whenever he faced a mismatch between the versions he decided what seemed to be the best choice. Before publishing, he also made a comparison between his version and with a version written in Jahrom, Fars, and mismatch cases were resolved by referencing to older versions in Paris, London and other places.

2) The printed version of Mohammad Ramezani in 1338 HijriShamsi. He had access to three printed versions and three handwritten ones. Two of the printed versions were belong to India and the other one was Edward Brown's printed version. The handwritten versions are as follows:
   1. The best handwritten version in HijriQamari which lacks the writer name and is very similar to the Edward Brown's printed version.
   2. The handwritten version by the date of 981 HijriQamari. The content of this version is not as accurate as the first one.
   3. The handwritten version by the date of 988 HijriQamari.

The superiority of this version over other versions

Since Edward Brown published his edited version of Tazkerat-Al Shoara in 1318 HijriShamsi, almost all researchers have used it as a reference source. In entire book there are less than two hundred spelling and printing errors. This is not only ignorable but also admirable considering the fact that Persian was Edward Brown’s foreign language. Even in Iran, the chances are very low that a native speaker of Persian could publish a book for the first as error free as Brown’s book. His work is absolutely appreciable. Although his book has the least amount of errors, it has some spelling mistakes and lacks appendices and margin notes. Mohammad Abbasi in 1337 HijriShamsi and Mohammad Ramezani in 1338 HijriShamsis used this version as a reference to edit TazkeratoAlshoara. However, unfortunately in addition to the errors existed in Brown's version, more than one thousand obvious errors can be seen in their book. Comparing the two editions Ramezani's edition has fewer errors but it is not error free at all. For example, in the introduction section of Ramezani's version page "ب" the date of writing of Tazkerat-Al Shoara was written to be 896 HijriQamari while the correct date is 892. Moreover it lacks appendices and margin notes and there is no pointing for Arabic expressions and Quran verses.

Below are some errors in Brown and Ramezani's versions:

Edward Brown, 1318: 1319
- خوشگوارش (Edward Brown, 1318: 324)
- تاج الشبوخ (Edward Brown, 1318: 34)
- صع آى دبل ُبثیل هظلْم عا لبثیل هیلْم ثکلذ (Ramezani, 1338: 18)
- نى لغض یب اَیَُِزَب الٌَّفؾُ الوُطوَئٌَِّخ (Edward Brown, 1318: 324)

Ramezani, 1338: 35
- مهغا گْیٌض ژى کي ژى کَ اًضع صل ُلاک (Ramezani, 1338: 35)
- صع ػهبًق چْى عّیغاًی ًوی (Ramezani, 1338: 35)

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Figure 1. The first page of Vaziri handwritten version

Figure 2. The last page of Vaziri handwritten version
REFERENCES


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